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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Patent No. 6,371,977
Issue Date: April 16, 2002
Application No. 09/408,861
Filed: September 30, 1999
Attorney Docket No. N-4310

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ON PETITION

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.378(c), filed May 16, 2011, to accept the unintentionally delayed payment of a maintenance fee for the above-identified patent.

There is no indication that the petition is signed by a registered patent attorney or patent agent of record. However, in accordance with 37 CFR 1.34, the signature of Mary Jo Redman appearing on the correspondence shall constitute a representation to the United States Patent and Trademark Office that he is authorized to represent the particular party in whose behalf he acts. If, Mary Jo Redman desires to receive correspondence regarding this file, the appropriate power of attorney documents must be submitted. A courtesy copy of this decision is being mailed to Mary Jo Redman, the petitioner herein. However, until otherwise instructed, all future correspondence regarding this application file will be directed solely to the above-noted correspondence address of record.

This patent expired at midnight March 23, 2011, for failure to pay the 7½ year maintenance fee. Since this petition was submitted within twenty-four months after the six-month grace period provided in 37 CFR 1.362(e), the petition was timely filed under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.378(c).

The petition is hereby **GRANTED**.

The maintenance fee is hereby accepted and the above-identified patent is reinstated as of the mail date of this decision.

A petition to accept the unintentionally delayed payment of a maintenance fee under 37 CFR 1.378(c) must be accompanied by (1) a statement that the delay was unintentional, (2) payment of the appropriate maintenance fee, unless previously submitted, and (3) payment of the surcharge set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(i)(2).

It is not apparent whether the person signing the statement of unintentional delay was in a position to have firsthand or direct knowledge of the facts and circumstances of the delay at issue. Nevertheless, such statement is being treated as having been made as the result of a reasonable inquiry into the facts and circumstances of such delay. In the event that such an inquiry has not been made, petitioner must make such an inquiry. If such inquiry results in the discovery that the delay in paying the maintenance fee under 37 CFR 1.378(c) was intentional, petitioner must notify the Office.

Petitioner will not receive future correspondence related to maintenance fees for the patent unless a "Fee Address" Indication Form (see PTO/SB/47) and Request for Customer Number (see PTO/SB/125) are submitted.

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision should be directed to JoAnne Burke at (571) 272-4584.



JoAnne Burke
Petitions Examiner
Office of Petitions

cc: Mary Jo Redman
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